

seem as if there is nothing we can do and that we're automatically on a downward decline.

And so I think what the Job Council has been invaluable in providing is a roadmap for the American people; not comprehensive, this is just a piece of the puzzle, but pointing to examples of where, if we do some smart things now, we can have a lot better outcomes in the future. And that can help to build back a sense of confidence, or a sense of confidence about our ability to meet these challenges.

So I just want to thank everybody for their leadership. And I'm looking forward to our next meeting. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:03 p.m. at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 5 training center. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. Participating in the discussion were

Jeffrey R. Immelt, chairman and chief executive officer, General Electric Co., in his capacity as Chair of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness; White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett; and John Doerr, partner, Kleimer Perkins Caufield & Byers; Stephen M. Case, chairman, Startup America Partnership; Sheryl K. Sandberg, chief operating officer, Facebook, Inc.; Matthew Rose, chairman and chief executive officer, BNSF Railway; Robert Wolf, chairman, UBS Americas; Mark T. Gallogly, founder and managing partner, Centerbridge Partners, L.P.; Brian Roberts, chairman and chief executive officer, Comcast Corporation; Darlene Miller, chief executive officer, Permac Industries; and Roger W. Ferguson, president and chief executive officer, TIAA-CREF, in their capacity as members of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Remarks to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 5 in Pittsburgh *October 11, 2011*

Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Have a seat.

It is great to be back in Pittsburgh! And it is wonderful to be here at IBEW Local 5. I had a chance to take a tour of your facilities, where you're training workers with the skills they need to compete for good jobs. And I see some of the guys that I met on the tour, both the instructors and the students who are here, and it's an example of how, if we get a good collaboration between business and labor and academia, that there is no reason why we cannot continue to have the best trained workers in the world. And that's got to be one of our best priorities.

So I'm here to talk about how we can create new jobs, particularly jobs doing what you do best, and that's rebuilding America. I brought some folks along with me as well. We got members of my Cabinet and my administration. We've got your mayor, Luke Ravenstahl is here. Where's Luke? Right here. Your county executive, Dan Onorato, is here. And one of

my dearest friends, who I stole from the Steelers to serve as the United States Ambassador to Ireland, Dan Rooney's in the house. And congratulations, Steelers. You guys did a little better than my Bears last night. [*Laughter*]

I've also brought a group of leaders with a wide range of new ideas about how we can help companies hire and grow, and we call them our White House Jobs Council. They come from some of the most successful businesses in the country: GE, Southwest, Intel. They come from labor; we got Rich Trumka on here from the AFL-CIO. We've got universities and people across the board who are intimately involved in growing companies, venture capitalists. Most importantly, they come from outside of Washington.

And I told them when we formed this council, I want to hear smart, forward-thinking ideas that will help our economy and our workers adapt to changing times. And together, they've done some extraordinary work to make those ideas happen. So I just want to personal-

ly thank every single one of the Job Council members for the great work that they're doing. And they issued a jobs report today. We're implementing a bunch of their ideas; it's going to make a difference all across the country. So thank you very much.

One of our focuses today was on entrepreneurship. And we did this because the story of America's success is written by America's entrepreneurs, men and women who took a chance on a dream and they turned that dream into a business and somehow changed the world. We just lost one of our greatest entrepreneurs and a friend, Steve Jobs, last week. And to see the outpouring of support for him and his legacy tells a story about what America's all about. We like to make things, create things, new products, new services that change people's lives.

And that's what people strive to do every day in this country. Now, most of the time people's dreams are simple: startups and storefronts on Main Street that let folks earn enough to support their family and make a contribution to their community. And sometimes their dreams take off and those startups become companies like Apple or FedEx or Ford, companies that end up hiring and employing hundreds of thousands of Americans and giving rise to entire new industries. And that spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation is how we became the world's leading economic power, and it's what constantly rejuvenates our economy.

So entrepreneurship's how we're going to create new jobs in the future. And I'm proud to say that just last month Pittsburgh won a Federal grant to promote entrepreneurship and job creation by expanding your already successful energy and health care industries in underserved parts of this city. So we're very excited about what Pittsburgh's doing here.

Today my jobs council laid out new actions we can take together—the private sector and Government—to help unleash a new era of entrepreneurship in America that will grow the economy and create jobs and strengthen our ability to compete with the rest of the world. But even as we help to fuel the next big American industry, we also understand that people

are out of work right now. They need help right now. So everything that we talked about with respect to the Job Council is going to help America become more competitive, help entrepreneurs create more jobs, lay the foundation for long-term, sustainable growth.

But right now our economy needs a jolt. Right now. And today the Senate of the United States has a chance to do something about jobs right now by voting for the "American Jobs Act." Now, this is a moment of truth for the U.S. Senate.

In front of them is a bill, a jobs bill, that independent economists have said would grow this economy and put people back to work. This is not my opinion, it's not my administration's opinion. This is people whose job it is for a living to analyze and evaluate what kind of impact certain policies would have. They've said this could grow the economy significantly and put significant numbers of Americans back to work. And no other jobs plan has that kind of support from economists, no plan from Congress, no plan from anybody.

It's a jobs bill with the kind of proposals that Democrats and Republicans have traditionally supported. It's a jobs bill that is entirely paid for by asking those of us who've been most fortunate, who've been incredibly blessed here in America, to contribute a little more to the country that contributed so much to our success.

Today is the day when every American will find out exactly where their Senator stands on this jobs bill. Republicans say that one of the most important things we can do is cut taxes. Then they should be for this plan. This jobs bill would cut taxes for virtually every worker and small business in America, every single one.

If you're a small-business owner that hires new workers or raises wages, you will get another tax cut. If you hire a veteran, you get a tax cut. People who have served overseas should not have to fight for a job when they come home. This jobs bill encourages small-business owners and entrepreneurs to expand and to hire. The Senate should pass it today.

Hundreds of thousands of teachers and firefighters and police officers have been laid off

because of State budget cuts. I'm sure, Luke, you're seeing it here in Pittsburgh. You're having to figure out how do we make sure that we keep our teachers in the classroom. The jobs council is uniform in believing that the most important thing for our competitiveness long term is making sure our education system is producing outstanding young people who are ready to go to work.

So this jobs bill that the Senate's debating today would put a lot of these men and women back to work right now, and it will prevent a lot more from losing their jobs.

So folks should ask their Senators, why would you consider voting against putting teachers and police officers back to work? Ask them what's wrong with having folks who have made millions or billions of dollars to pay a little more. Nothing punitive, just going back to the kinds of tax rates that used to exist under President Clinton, so that our kids can get the education they deserve.

There are more than a million laid-off construction workers who could be repairing our roads and bridges and modernizing our schools right now. Right now. That's no surprise to you. Pittsburgh has a lot of bridges—[laughter]—has about 300 of them. Did you know that more than a quarter of the bridges in this State are rated structurally deficient? Structurally deficient, that's a fancy way of saying, they need to be fixed. There are nearly 6,000 bridges in Pennsylvania alone that local construction workers could be rebuilding right now. The average age of bridges around Pittsburgh is 54 years old. So we're still benefiting from the investments, the work that was done by our grandparents to make this a more successful, more competitive economy.

Here in Pittsburgh, 54 years old, the average age of these bridges, 13 years older than the national average. The Hulton Bridge over in Oakmont was built more than a hundred years ago. There are pieces of it that are flaking off. How much longer are we going to wait to put people back to work rebuilding bridges like that? This jobs bill will give local contractors and local construction workers the chance to

get back to work rebuilding America. Why would any Senator say no to that?

In line with the recommendations of my jobs council, my administration is cutting redtape; we're expediting several major construction projects all across the country to launch them faster and more efficiently. We want to streamline the process, the permitting process, just get those things moving. So we're doing our job, trying to expedite the process. Now it's time for Congress to do their job. The Senate should vote for this jobs bill today. It should not wait. It should get it done.

Now, a lot of folks in Congress have said they won't support any new spending that's not paid for. And I think that's important. We've got to make sure we're living within our means so that we can make the vital investments in our future. That's why I signed into law \$1 trillion in spending cuts over the summer. And we'll find more places to cut those things that we don't need. We can't afford everything. We got to make choices; we got to prioritize. Programs that aren't working, that aren't giving us a good bang for the buck, that aren't helping to grow the economy, that aren't putting people back to work, we're going to have to trim those back. So we're willing to make tough choices. The American people, they're already tightening their belts. They understand what it's all about to make tough choices.

But if we want to create jobs and close the deficit, then we can't just cut our way out of the problem. We're also going to have to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share. If they don't, we only have three other choices: We can either increase the deficit, or we can ask the middle class to pay more at a time when they're just barely getting by—haven't seen their wages or incomes go up at all, in fact, have gone down over the last decade—or we can just sit back and do nothing. And I'm not willing to accept any of those three options.

In a—[applause]—whenever I talk about revenue, people start complaining about, "Well, is he engaging in class warfare?" or "Why is he going after the wealthiest?" Look, because I've been fortunate and people bought a bunch of my books, I'm in that category now. [Laughter]

And in a perfect world with unlimited resources, nobody would have to pay any taxes. But that's not the world we live in. We live in a world where we've got to make choices.

So the question we have to ask ourselves as a society, as a country, is, would you rather keep taxes exactly as they are for those of us who've benefited most from this country, tax breaks that we don't need and weren't even asking for, or do we want construction workers and electrical workers to have jobs rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools? Would we rather maintain these tax breaks for the wealthiest few, or should we give tax cuts to the entrepreneurs who might need it to start that business, launch that new idea that they've got? Or tax breaks to middle class families who are likely to spend this money now and get the economy moving again?

This is a matter of priorities. And it's a matter of shared sacrifice. And by the way, if you ask most wealthy Americans, they'll tell you they're willing to do more. They're willing to do their fair share to help this country that they love.

So it's time to build an economy that creates good, middle class jobs in this country. It's time to build an economy that honors the values of hard work and responsibility. It's time to build an economy that lasts. And that's what this jobs bill will help us do. The proposals in the "American Jobs Act" aren't just a bunch of random investments to create make-work jobs. They're things we have to do if we want to compete with other countries for the best jobs and the newest industries. We have to have the most educated workers.

This week, I'm going to be hosting the President of South Korea. I had lunch with him in Seoul, South Korea. He told me—I said, "What's your biggest problem?" He says: "The parents are too demanding. I'm having to import teachers because all our kids want to learn English when they're in first grade." So they're hiring teachers in droves at a time when we're laying them off. That doesn't make any sense.

We've got to have the best transportation and communications networks in the world. We used to have the best stuff. We used to be

the envy of the world. People would come to our countries, and they would say: "Look at the Hoover Dam. Look at the Golden Gate Bridge." Now people go to Beijing Airport, and they say, "I wish we had an airport like that." We can't compete that way, playing for 2d or 3d or 4th or 8th or 15th place.

We've got to support new research and new technology, innovative entrepreneurs, the next generation of manufacturing. Any one of the business leaders here today will tell you that's true. If we want to compete and win in this global economy, if we want this century to be another American century, we can't just go back to an economic model that's based on how much we can borrow, how much debt we can rack up, and how much we can consume. Our prosperity has to be built on what we make and what we sell around the world and on the skills of our workers and the ingenuity of our businesspeople.

We have to restore the values that have always made this a great country: idea of hard work and responsibility that's rewarded; everybody, from Main Street to Wall Street, doing their fair share, playing by the same set of rules.

And so, Pittsburgh, that starts now, and in—I'm going to need your help. Your Senators are voting today on this jobs bill, so this is gut-check time. Any Senator who votes no should have to look you in the eye and tell you what exactly they're opposed to. These are proposals that have traditionally been bipartisan. Republicans used to want to build roads and bridges. That wasn't just a Democratic idea. We've all believed that education was important. You've got to come—if you're voting no against this bill, look a Pittsburgh teacher in the eye and tell them just why they don't deserve to get a paycheck again and, more importantly, be able to transmit all those—all that knowledge to their kids. Come tell the students why they don't deserve their teacher back, so that now they've got under—overcrowded classrooms, or arts classes or music classes or science classes have been cut back.

Come and look at a construction worker here in Pittsburgh or an electrical worker in

the eye, and tell them why they shouldn't be out there fixing our bridges or rebuilding our schools and equipping them with the latest science labs or the latest Internet connection. Explain why people should have to keep driving their kids across bridges with pieces falling off.

Or explain to a small-business owner or workers in this community why you'd rather defend tax breaks for the wealthiest few than fight for tax cuts for the middle class. I think they'd have a hard time explaining why they voted no on this bill other than the fact that I proposed it. And so—[*applause*].

I realize some Republicans in Washington have said that even if they agreed with the ideas in the "American Jobs Act," they're wary of passing it because it would give me a win. Give me a win? This is not about giving me a win. It's why folks are fed up with Washington. This is not about giving anybody a win. It's not about giving Democrats or Republicans a win. It's about giving the American people who are hurting out there a win. It's about giving small businesses, entrepreneurs, and construction workers a win. It's about giving the American people—all of us, together—a win.

I was talking to the Jobs Council—by the way, not everybody here has necessarily voted for me. [*Laughter*] But they're patriots, and they care about their country. And we were talking about how, in normal times, these are all commonsense ideas. These aren't radical ideas. These are things that traditionally everybody would be for, particularly at a time of emergency like we're in, where so many people are out of work and businesses want to see more customers. So for folks outside of Washington, being against something for the sake of politics makes absolutely no sense. It makes absolutely no sense.

And the next election is 13 months away. The American people don't have the luxury of waiting 13 months. They don't have the luxury of watching Washington go back and forth in the usual fashion when this economy needs to be strengthened dramatically. A lot of folks are living week to week, paycheck to paycheck, even day to day. They need action, and they

need action now. They want Congress to do what they were elected to do: put country ahead of party, do what's right for our economy, do what's right for our people. In other words, they want Congress to do your job.

So—and I've said this to some folks in the other party. I've said, I promise you, we'll still have a lot of stuff to argue about, even if we get this thing done, about the general direction of the country and how we're going to build it and how we're going to outeducate and outinnovate and outbuild other countries around the world. There will be a lot of time for political debating. But right now we need to act on behalf of the American people.

So for those of you who are in the audience or those of you who are watching, I need you to call, e-mail, tweet, fax, or you can write an old-fashioned letter—I don't know if people still do that—[*laughter*]. Let Congress know who they work for. Remind them what's at stake when they cast their vote. Tell them that the time for gridlock and games is over. The time for action is now. And tell them to pass this bill.

If you want construction workers on the job, pass the bill. If you want teachers back in the classroom, pass the bill. If you want tax cuts for your family and small-business owners, pass this bill. If you want our veterans to share in the opportunity that they upheld and they defended, do the right thing, pass this bill. All right? Now's the time to act.

I know that this is a moment where a lot of folks are wondering whether America can move forward together the way it used to. And I'm confident we can. We're not a people who just sit by and watch things happen to us. We shape our own destiny. That's what's always set us apart. We are Americans, and we are tougher than the times we're in right now. We've been through tougher times before. We're bigger than the politics that has been constraining us. We can write our own story. We can do it again. So let's meet this moment. Let's get to work and show the rest of the world just why it is that America is the greatest country on Earth.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. at the IBEW Local Union No. 5 Apprenticeship Training Center. In his remarks, he referred

to President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea; and Sens. Robert P. Casey and Patrick J. Toomey.

Statement on Job Growth Legislation *October 11, 2011*

Tonight a majority of United States Senators voted to advance the “American Jobs Act.” But even though this bill contains the kind of proposals Republicans have supported in the past, their party obstructed the Senate from moving forward on this jobs bill.

Tonight’s vote is by no means the end of this fight. Independent economists have said that the “American Jobs Act” would grow the economy and lead to nearly 2 million jobs, which is why the majority of the American people support these bipartisan, commonsense proposals. And we will now work with Senator Reid to make sure that the individual proposals in this jobs bill get a vote as soon as possible.

In the coming days, Members of Congress will have to take a stand on whether they believe we should put teachers, construction

workers, police officers, and firefighters back on the job. They’ll get a vote on whether they believe we should cut taxes for small-business owners and middle class Americans, or whether we should protect tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires.

With each vote, Members of Congress can either explain to their constituents why they’re against commonsense, bipartisan proposals to create jobs, or they can listen to the overwhelming majority of American people who are crying out for action. Because with so many Americans out of work and so many families struggling, we can’t take no for an answer. Ultimately, the American people won’t take no for an answer. It’s time for Congress to meet their responsibility, put their party politics aside, and take action on jobs right now.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Orlando, Florida *October 11, 2011*

The President. Thank you very much. Well, thank you. It is good to be in Orlando! It’s good to be back in Florida. Some perfect Florida weather out there. To everybody who’s watching, come on down to Florida. It’s gorgeous.

We’ve got a couple of special people I want to acknowledge. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Buddy Dyer, is in the house; wonderful Congresswoman Corrine Brown. I want to thank CeCe Teneal for the outstanding performance. And I want to thank Alan Ginsberg and Mark NeJame for their wonderful hard work to make this thing happen. Thank you very much, everybody.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. Although I have to say that backstage I had the chance to see Dwight Howard—[*applause*]

and Dwight is a great friend, and I told him I’m a little heartbroken that the NBA season is getting delayed here. [*Laughter*] So I’m hoping those guys are back on the court soon. In the meantime, I’m here because I need all of your help. I need your help.

I’ve come here because we’ve got to finish what we started in 2008. A lot of you got involved in that campaign back in 2008, and let’s just remember, because sometimes there’s revisionist history and everybody says, well, that was such a smooth campaign, and I say, that’s not exactly how I remembered it. [*Laughter*]

We campaigned in 2008 not because we thought it was going to be a cakewalk. I mean, after all, you had a candidate named Barack Hussein Obama, so you knew that wasn’t going to be easy. You didn’t need a poll to tell you